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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A DISCUSSION OF

THE RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS OF ADOLESCENCE

EXAMINING THE THESIS THAT THERE IS A CONSCIOUSNESS OF
RELIGION IN ADOLESCENCE, OR AT LEAST, THAT THERE ARE
THOSE PHASES OF ADOLESCENT LIFE TO WHICH THE CHRISTIAN
RELIGION CAN SPEAK WITH SUPREME ADEQUACY AND AUTHORITY,
AND CONSIDERING SOMETHING OF THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH
IN THIS IMPORTANT AREA OF LIFE.

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L.F.L.

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INTRODUCTION

The study of adolescence and the writing of books upon the subject is a relatively new field and consequently one which has been explored by a great many writers with variable success and helpfulness. From the first great work by Hall* down to the very latest to leave the presses, we see a very interesting development in emphasis as advance in research methods and the number of studies available have shed new light upon the period. It is of interest to notice as well that very recent writers still deplore the lack of concrete information and that they have become much less dogmatic than their predecessors, coming now to say only that such and such a trend seems to be evident.

While further research will undoubtedly increase our understanding of this particular period it will always be difficult to make any firm categorical statements with regard to it, at least from the purely scientific viewpoint. Psychology from the first has found this one of its main problems for a man cannot be analysed like a physical element, at least not in that area of his behavior which makes him distinctively human. Of his body, his chemistry, size, shape, etc. we can make accurate observation. Of the more complicated and significant features of his personality, and behavior however, we must say that our progress is relatively slow and great care must be exercised in drawing our conclusions. Since the adolescent then is one who is in the process of becoming

* G. Stanley Hall "Adolescence-Its Psychology"

an adult, by very definition of the term, and has not as yet reached any one final stage we see the further difficulties here involved.

However difficult the study of man, the necessity of the study is still pressed upon us and we accept with great appreciation the light which has been and will be cast on this understanding through psychological research. Still, more than pure science is involved if only for the reason that it is man who must do the looking and seek really to understand himself. Therefore we may find great help from fields other than science itself and must be ready to accept this help and add it to our supply.

The newness of the study of adolescence arises directly from the recent formation of a group which can really be called adolescent. It is only very lately that the group has emerged to such an extent as to demand real study. Undoubtedly children have always had to become adults, a process which is evidently begun in the very earliest years. Never before has there been such a prolonged period set aside for the finalizing of this development where the individual, no longer a child, is kept out of adult life and so for some years is in the "in-between stage". The newness of this group is referred to by Cole* and many other investigators as they show that previously societies have demanded active participation of all available hands in the economic development and hence there was no time which could be left for lengthy preparation for adulthood. With modern industry, surplus population and generally advanced culture only now do we find our-

* "Psychology of Adolescence" L. Cole P. 3ff.

selves with "hands to spare" and hence allow ourselves this period of education and development in our high school group.

Formally the boundary of the adolescent group is set at the beginning of puberty, which may occur within a wide age range from nine to sixteen. The greatest incidence occurs about eleven years however, so this may be set as the entering year. The fact that girls reach puberty roughly two years before boys and consequently are "older" as a group than boys of equal age is significant as we shall examine more fully later. The problem of setting the upper age limit we find more complicated for it implies full maturation intellectually and emotionally. We know that many never seem to reach this level while others attain it relatively early but for general purposes the mid twenties has often been set*. It might be better if we followed the example of more recent writers, subdividing adolescence in three periods or two distinguishing between adolescence and youth. This is done as the group which has brought attention to itself is generally that group up to age twenty or twenty-one. Certainly the maturing process does continue beyond this point however.

The necessity for subdividing the period is another evidence of its' increasing length. No longer for us is it simply a matter of accepting into adult society the individual who has reached puberty

* For sample discussion here see F. Tracy -- "The Psychology of

and has been well prepared to meet whatever tests are given for admission. This was the case in primitive society and can still be seen among a few groups*. In such a situation little conflict was evident as the child suddenly gained full rights with adults and had only to completely fit himself into these adult activities for which he or she had been preparing. That our society on the other hand gives no importance to puberty itself is pointed out by such as Landis** as a factor in demonstrating the lack of position given adolescents where even full sexual maturation cannot be fulfilled in marriage till social and economic conditions permit.

Despite the lack of acknowledgment given puberty, the physical changes which occur then, with their resultant emotional and personality effects are important at least in the study of early adolescence. It is of interest to note that these physical changes are not emphasized to the degree they once were by the "storm and stress" emphasis of Hall and his followers. This point is made by such as Landis and Kuhlen*** as they bring to us the more modern approach to adolescence which we shall deal with later. These physical changes which have so traditionally been treated by writers in the field still have importance as mentioned above however, and they do introduce us to this whole period. Therefore to begin our examination and set the stage for later discussion let us too follow the established pattern.

* some such are described in "From the South Seas"---Margaret Mead.

** "Adolescence and Youth" Landis P.33

*** "The Psychology of Adolescent Development" Kuhlen P.2

CHAPTER I

AN OUTLINE OF ADOLESCENT CHARACTERISTICS

I An Outline of Adolescent Characteristics

i Physical Changes

In this particular field we have the one place where undoubtedly a great change takes place as the growth of the individual spurts ahead. Here and probably only here can accurate measurements of change be made whereas the earlier psychologists of adolescence would attribute such a radical alteration to many aspects of the personality. However much more recent study can disprove tremendous innovation in the rest of character, in this one field it is an established fact.

Following a period of slow growth and relative stability in the child's life, when as a rule he consolidates his powers, there occurs just before, or concomitant with puberty*, a sudden spurt in growth. First height increases rapidly as limbs, hands, and feet increase in size and the tall "gangly" adolescent appears. In this stage of disproportion the individual is destined to remain until two or three years have elapsed when trunk growth begins to catch up to that of ^mlimbs, and the rate of height increase slows, permitting a proportional weight development to take place. This disturbance of proportion is evidenced throughout the rapid growth stage as each part of the body, even each part of the face, goes ahead at its own rate of ~~of other~~

For discussion here see

* Adolescent Development ---Hurlock P. 70.

see also Ch. 2-3 for detailed analysis of this section.

regardless of other portions. This may give real difficulty to the individual just as he is becoming more self conscious and wanting to fit into the normal pattern of adult life which he now realizes he is entering.

The problem of adjustment may be great here if interest is centered solely in what is occurring physically for now there is a whole new body to get used to and control. An added problem may be seen in the forementioned earlier growth increase in girls than boys just when life is beginning to have some social emphasis and occasional school dances are held. Secondary sex characteristics are a problem to some individuals as beard beginnings and "voice cracking" take place in boys and breast and hip development in girls. Then of course where adequate educational preparation has not been made the development¹ of sex organs and nocturnal emissions or menstruation bring another perplexing difficulty in the adolescent's life.

Internal changes as well take place as was often more referred to by earlier writers as a cause of difficulty than is so at present. For example the greater proportional increase in heart size than in that of arteries was regarded as dangerous and adolescents warned about not being too strenuously involved in athletics for fear of damaging the heart. There seems to be some variation of

opinion here but some do discredit the significance of this as a real danger*. Growth of the stomach in size might well be referred to as an explanation, along with the extra food needed for growth, of the great appetite for which adolescents seem to be famed. Couple this with a new assertion of independence and abnormal choices in foods and we come out with the digestive difficulties seemingly characteristic of the age group generally.

Glandular changes also take place, the most important of which of course is the presence of gonadal hormone and the secretion of the adrenals which quickly reach adult size at adolescence and so influence the anger- fear reactions. The thymus becomes almost inactive at this time while the thyroid increases, especially in girls and may result in a thyroid imbalance causing either sluggishness and overweight or nervousness and excitability. Thus we can see that there may be upsets resulting from glandular activity in adolescence. Results of such are often seen in the more socially problematical situations such as excessive perspiration especially under the stress of appearing adequate in social settings, class recitation and so on. Skin troubles or acne can also cause much discomfort to the individual, especially to he who is not adequately adjusted in another area.

The foregoing section has I think sufficed to give us a general

* "Psychology of Adolescent Development" ----Kuhlen P. 37.

picture of the physical changes occurring at adolescence and a hint of some of the problems which may arise in the personality and emotional fields as well. However we do recognize that this period is short lived, about two to three years and while the problems here evolved may temporarily seem great to the individual they soon pass away. The individual emerges without the personality tempests often earlier thought to be almost miraculously avoided in view of the exaggerated stress of physical change. There is apparently no reason for lack of adjustment to these difficulties in a relatively short time provided sex education has been given beforehand, and no other basic personality problem is present to be simply accentuated by this period of change.

ii Instincts, Emotions and Feelings

The above title has been used for this section mainly through want of a better one and perhaps partly in deference to the traditional terms used. In any case it does indicate our general field of interest in terms fairly familiar. The difficulty arises in that these specific subjects no longer seem to be of prime importance in understanding adolescent behavior and especially so in the aim of this particular study. Instincts as unlearned but inherent in the human as the uppermost member of the animal kingdom seem to be few

in number and unimportant aside from those connected with self preservation, food supply, flight or defence etc. The one instinct we could possibly mention as especially applicable to adolescence would be that of procreation associated as it is with sexual development.

Generally speaking however, research has shown man to be an extremely malleable creature upon whom society itself has the greatest behavioral effect. Indeed to demonstrate this fact was the purpose of Mead's original publications* and her evidence and that of others has been largely accepted with the result that the main emphasis has now been placed on the effect of society itself in character formation instead of on the few inherent physical features.

The same general approach may be given to emotions in adolescence which are no longer seen as unique to this period in themselves. Instead we look on them as being largely determined by the emotional behavior of the individual learned in earliest childhood and continued on into adult life. Thus it may be seen that the adolescent prone to outbursts of anger is simply an older form of the child who exhibited the same tendency. There is however in adolescence a difference in that the individual must learn more control of response to emotion in keeping with the general need to

* "From the South Seas" -----M. Mead Introduction P.x-xi.

fit into adult life.

An examination of the sources of emotion arousal may better indicate for us the emphasis we should choose in this section. It is found for example that those emotional developments distinctive to adolescence involve either an obstruction of personal liberties or self assertion or a fear of seeming inadequate and being unable to meet social demands. This is very natural when we realize that the individual, having matured physically and realizing his own place in life, begins to rebel particularly against infringements on his own liberty. Then too seeing the necessity of fitting into his own place in life, he is naturally troubled by experiences which show his own inadequacy.

Perhaps then the most important underlying factor in this particular phase ~~is~~ is a realization of the problems involved in wanting to be accepted and to have a definite place among his own age group. Contrasting this with the desire for self assertion and its effect on parent-child relationships we have the two prime factors involved in adolescent emotions. The growing individual feels a need for independence and indeed society expects more adult behavior from him. However he has not the skills nor experience for all new situations and so it is plain that frustrations, fears, and anger

situations will frequently arise. Couple this with the general adjustment problems earlier mentioned and realize the glandular developments taking place and we can easily see why emotions are heightened at adolescence.

There is then a movement toward self-assertions which arises in a desire for control over objects, situations and peers as well as showing the concomitant defense reactions against the same things in those who cannot otherwise cope with them as Dr. Arlitt* points out. There are as well the problems associated with social developments and acceptance and so the interest in achieving recognition in sport in social groups and in planning committees is evidenced. The individual wants independence and acceptance yet he is not yet fully equipped to assert these privileges well and so conflicts result. Another great source of difficulty is that imposed by adults who judge him by their standards instead of by those of adolescence while he is not yet fully adult.

From the previous discussion we see why parental authority is objected to unless the adolescent has been given opportunity to share in setting the rules. & We see too why adolescents will go to such lengths to fit in with the group in all kinds of fads and activities and why they so enjoy just getting together and talking

*"Adolescent Psychology " -----A.H. Arlitt P.34

while their abilities in social interchange are increased.

Let us go on now to examine briefly the working out of this principle in the three basic emotions beginning with anger and following Cole's analysis*. The major anger producing situations are described in this work as being those where another individual encroaches on the activity of one or an action is performed contrary to the standards set up by the individual. The result of the emotion while still having some physical effect, (e.g. foot stamping, crying) becomes more and more simply verbal and the development toward adulthood is clear.

Of fear we can say the number of "fearful" situations has greatly decreased between childhood and adolescence as is natural with the greater knowledge and understanding attained. The causes of fear as previously indicated have also changed for

***"Adolescents are afraid primarily of social situations in which they will appear to a disadvantage; they fear also disease and accidental violence."

The response to fear is universally, in an adolescent phrase, being "scared stiff" or running away. The exception here is that the running away is now more often done before the fearful situation arises and great measures are taken to avoid such circumstances.

*L.Cole -----"Psychology of Adolescence" Ch.3

**L. Cole ----" Ibid P. 65.

The third emotion, "love" may be discussed with the understanding that because of his general development, in addition to those persons which were objects of childhood affection, he turns from affection for a friend of the same age and sex to that for one of the same age group and opposite sex. Of course these stages are not distinct and overlap considerably. There may also be an in between stage of affection for older people known as the "crush" stage but the normal adolescent will reach good heterosexual adjustment during the adolescent period.

To repeat and summarize then, we have seen the importance of emotion in adolescence and its new center in a revised concept of self with the all-important necessity of finding a place for self among equals as among adults. There is strain over the acceptance of the new role, and concern as to whether or not the individual is as well fitted or "normal" for the tasks as others. It is a confused time when the individual is at once dependent and independent and is anxious to launch out on his own wings yet incapable of doing so entirely. Emotions then are at a higher pitch than at other times. The result is a strain on both adults and adolescent. Indeed one may well wonder which of the two is the real problem, i.e. the child or the parent, for it seems the parent

may easily attribute his own inability to give up authority and refusal to judge adolescents by any but adult standards to the adolescent himself as a "problem". In any case it is true that;

" In any of these different circumstances grown persons often are at a loss as to what attitudes to take to him. In some ways he is a child, in others he is adult, and at sometimes seems to be wholly one or the other. If in any respect- such as in intellectual development or social responsibility- he seems to be conspicuously advanced, adults may add to his confusion by expecting him to live continuously and in every way on a mature level. ¶ Being in fact far from fully grown he may, under such pressure, find it difficult to live without strain at any level."*

Going on now to general feelings at adolescence, we realize that these, being more complex than emotions, and directly involving intellect as well develop more profoundly in the later period. This general realm is one upon which few writers seem willing to commit themselves and hence perhaps more research in this field is indicated as necessary. Another difficulty is involved in the complexity of feelings and the lack of any very satisfactory methods of measuring them.. There are occasional references to z adolescence as a time when there is a special love of beauty and contrasting

* C.B. Zachry "Emotion and Conduct in Adolescence" P.57.

abhorrence of ugly or dirty things. Others point to adolescent desire to help the under privileged and give themselves wholeheartedly in service to any good cause. Still the hatred of the adolescent group for example toward negroes or foreigners in particular loyalties must be reckoned with.

Along this line it seems to me that such tendencies are attributed to adolescence mainly by the idealist. Perhaps the best we can do is to admit that adolescents will give themselves wholeheartedly to a cause they choose and that enthusiastically due to their general psychological make up. However whether the course is good or bad seems to be secondary to whether it is adopted by the adult population or is "popular" with the teen-age group as a whole. In other words what is approved of is followed warmly but the choice seems to be a matter of social approval and ability to attract loyalty. Whether adolescents are idealists or not seems to depend on the ultimate goal of society and those who would make them all seekers of truth and beauty are probably wishful thinkers. At least so we must conclude until research can prove otherwise.

The above question brings us again to the problem of the changeability of the human organism. The goal chosen by society seems to determine the goal of adolescents and it is significant

to note that Dr. Mead* asserts the difficulty of changing children into something different than their parents or society. This would seem to end Utopian ideals about educating a new race of people distinct from their society. The chief stimulus in our society has been made success or promotion, say Dr. Mead, and even the dating game of adolescence is directed to this end. Therefore this primarily sexual behavior is not body stimulated but indulged in as the necessary society- set goal for success. You date to achieve a reputation for popularity and success only. This is a very interesting idea to those so concerned about the whole field of dating, petting and so on as it is evidenced in our adolescent population.

In any case this whole realm of feeling and attitude may better be dealt with in the succeeding chapter of this work regarding Adolescence and Religion.

111 Mental Developments

One more field must receive our attention as we endeavour to paint the background picture of the adolescent. This then is the whole realm of mental and intellectual developments in adolescence to which we now turn. The importance of an understanding of this -----

* See Dr. Mead's introduction to "From the South Seas."

phase is well illustrated by Kuhlen*.

"An understanding of how mental abilities develop is fundamental to an understanding of adolescence. During the period when increased physical size and motor ability are permitting greater freedom of movement in the environment, growth toward intellectual maturity is resulting in increasing sensitivity to various aspects of that environment."

Not only does this development, he continues, aid in the formation of opinions and greater understanding of complex situations but it also may add its own problems of adjustment. These take the form of conflicting ideas and an awareness of inconsistencies about him.

That intelligence is a very difficult quality to measure is clearly indicated by the variations of intelligence test results**. The conflicting generalizations made by various authors regarding these tests is further indication of the difficulty in this field. Certainly much further study will be necessary before a really accurate measure is achieved if it ever is. Despite these difficulties however, we may note several general trends indicated by the result of such tests. One such particularly applicable here is that indications are that intelligence reaches its highest peak in precisely this adolescent period. Researchers disagree as to just

* Kuhlen -----"The Psychology of Adolescent Development" P.86.

**Kuhlen-----" for sample discussion see this author P.86-95.

when it occurs but certainly growth in intelligence does level off in the teen age period and even a decline is indicated after say twenty years has been reached*.

Mental ability then, like other factors connected with the individual, simply increases from points already reached in childhood and no particular increase is noted to correspond say with that noted in physical growth. The fact however that this ability seems to reach adult level and become established in this period is of great importance. The ability to learn and retain material increases in the adolescent level to its peak and undoubtedly increased ability to concentrate has great influence here**. Of course emotional problems, crushes, anger situations may temporarily cloud this ability. Not only can such basic material be more readily received but the individual grows in his ability to relate such facts one to the other. Here then we see the increased capacity to combine ideas and to make judgments about ideas. A very important development here is also the ability to think critically about material presented so that it may be accurately combined in forming generalised concepts.

A warning comes along with this development however for again as Schneiders *** points out because of lack of knowledge and

*See Kuhlén's table P. 97 for a compilation of results of various test patterns.

**"The Psychology of Adolescence." A.A. Schneiders Ch. 22 P.493

*** ibid P. 498 for discussion of particular aspects of mental

proneness to allow non-intellectual factors to influence judgments, the adolescent must be guided carefully along the initial stages of this growth. There is also some tendency naturally to form decisions without knowing all the facts involved but this will be gradually overcome as maturity is attained.

Applying now a picture of this growth in mental ability to the general self assertion and need to find a place in society, our picture of adolescence is completed. Evidently there is a tendency to question old ideas and value judgments which formerly were simply accepted. Now the realization that others think differently must be faced and this can prove a shock. Then too, the ~~question~~ emphasis our society places on achievement and success applied to school life can prove a serious cause of upset to the adolescent. However this stage must be passed through in reaching maturity and it should be regarded as a time of great opportunity both for the adolescent and those responsible for guiding his development.

We have seen then that general intelligence opens out whole new horizons of adventure to adolescence just as physical maturity and social consciousness do. A new ability to perceive new meanings* and relate ideas allows the individual a glimpse of much greater possibilities beyond his present experience. He realizes that not

* See L. Cole "Psychology of Adolescence" P. 216 ff.

only is he becoming adult in body and in social relationship and desire for independence but also his own mind gives him new opportunity as well as responsibility. It can be seen that what is done with this opportunity has profound effect on both the individual life and society. Here concepts and ideals are formed as the child becomes gradually adult and sets for himself those ideas which will govern his whole pattern of activity.

CHAPTER TWO
THE RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS
OF ADOLESCENCE

THE RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS OF ADOLESCENCE

We may now turn to the primary concern of this work as we begin our consideration of the whole realm of adolescence and religion.. We will ask ourselves if there is a consciousness of religion innate to the adolescent personality. The place of formal or institutionalised religion in this pattern will be our concern as well, as we see how it relates this field of inquiry.

We have already seen something of the transitory nature of adolescence as the child, through a long and gradual process, becomes the adult. Undoubtedly one of the most important achievements of the adult is the formation and acceptance of a general code of beliefs about which the individual organizes his life. The incorporation of a good set of ideals and attitudes and their resultant effect upon behavior is of prime interest to all as all must live together in society. From only this purely practical and selfish viewpoint surely we agree. When we add the desire to see a useful, purposeful and happy life lived by each individual our point is securely made.

In childhood conduct is governed by the external demands of parents and their approval or disapproval is the standard of what is right or wrong. Parental standards then, and those of others who may have authority over the child, are accepted as correct generally speaking though this does not of course mean a concurrence of will in

all cases. As the child increases its contacts with others outside the family group, these too are judged by the parental code. When however the individual experiences more new relationships and begins to realize his own powers of thought in this area, doubts may begin to arise. Especially is this true as it is realized that others do not have the same standards and even sometimes accept what is abhorrent to the family group. The question arises then as to just what is right and what pattern must be followed in our relationships with others. Adolescence especially with its new sense of individuality, its self and social consciousness, together with the new horizons of intellectual adventure which can all be expanded into a greater freedom, experiences this dilemma. It is clearly seen that codes of behavior differ radically and that they range all the way from pure selfishness to the detriment of all other, to the most idealistic form of self denial imagineable. The task of determining what is the right goal, the correct way to behave "for me" is one which faces each aspirant to adulthood. The importance of the correct choice here I'm sure will be admitted by all though no doubt readers would disagree among themselves as to what is the correct choice.

Before examining the bases upon which such decisions are made let us pause to see just what changes do take place in the behavior

of adolescents. Thus we can see the practical working out of this question before turning to the theories lying behind that behavior.

I Adolescent Behavior

Perhaps I could have designated this section as dealing with moral development as is often done in books on Adolescent Psychology. However because of the narrow use of the word in its corrupted meaning in popular usage I have avoided it. In any case our purpose is not particularly to judge the behavior as moral, immoral, or amoral, but simply to see what it is. Then we may compare that behavior to what we traditionally regard as right or wrong.

As we have already said, actions are judged right or wrong by the child, according to the response of parents and teachers. Of course there will be attempts to "get away" with deeds known to bring disapproval but at least the standard is there. Then as the adolescent contacts varying standards and is somewhat freed from such overarching control, he asks, "What standard must I accept for myself?" In the initial stages there is a tendency simply to oppose parental rules as part of exerting his independence. However the standard of right and wrong is still there and the indications are that despite the wider contact with schoolmates and others, the home still exerts the major influence*.

* "Psychology of Adolescence." -----K.G. Garrison P.180

The main feature of adolescent judgment in this regard seems to be an initial failure, even in eighteen year olds, to generalize ideas of right and wrong. The concept is still based on specific acts already experienced and in a new situation such as Cole depicts*, there exists only a very hazy idea of the rightness or wrongness of an act, simply because it has never specifically been encountered before. In other words there is a failure to generalize the principle behind the thing and the specific knowledge of childhood is often the only criterion. Our research on this question is limited here but that there should be such a poorly developed concept is notable especially in the light of those intellectual advances taking place as we noticed in the first chapter. The lack of a general principle of guidance is dangerous in one who is asserting independence and constantly meeting new situations. Of course we recognize too that even when the act is known to be wrong this is no assurance that it will not be performed** as of course can be said of childhood behavior as well.

Speaking of behavior generally, we find there is no particular change in adolescence but, as has been noticed before, general development follows childhood experience. With wider experience there is a growing liberality toward borderline evils*** which are seen to be acceptable to others. The new freedom of adolescence also

*Cole-----"Psychology of Adolescence" P. 165.

** "The Psychology of Adolescence"---A. Schneiders P. 372

*** Kuhlen "Psychology of Adolescent Development" P. 437- 438.

means that tendencies toward criminal behavior will be revealed now in actual juvenile delinquency. Couple this with the general desire to break with authority and experiment "on your own" and we see why there are more arrests made between the ages of seventeen to nineteen than in any other age group*.

We can say then that there is no particularly unique aspect of adolescent behavior beyond that occasional rebellion against authority to be expected as the individual freedom asserts itself. The confusion in ideals as well causes extremes in behavior to evidence themselves as the individual experiments with one course then another in an effort to find himself. There is little consistency then for a time because there is no uniform standard of behavior. First one goal, then another may be set up and if the aim is too high, failure and feelings of guilt will be experienced. The whole problem is then that the adolescent is trying to behave as an independent person often setting his goal on an adult level yet not having the experience or ability of an adult to yet reach that level. Not only is he bewildered as to which standard he should accept but he is often defeated by his own lack of ability in self control. Real assistance is needed from more experienced persons in generalizing right and wrong and judging specific acts yet, sensing the demands of his own independence he is often unwilling to accept help.

* Hurlock -----" Adolescent Development." P. 385.

We note here too that as development continues other persons are set up as the example to be followed. These coincide with the objects of affection mentioned in our earlier section. Unwilling to accept parental authority* the prevailing standard among the gang who are his peers, is more favorably received. This is often the initial step in beginning to judge things for himself, for he finds here a code he can accept and find reason for as compared to parental codes, the reason for which is obscure to him. There is also often a devotion to another adult who may for a time be the pattern followed in all behavior as Blois points out;**

"This is a period of deep confidence and intense emotional friendships, often between two members of the same sex, of hero worship, idealism, and devotion. Usually the adolescent at this stage seeks an adult to copy, some older man or woman on whom to model his character and behavior,-----."

It is easy to see why this particular stage may easily be very disconcerting to parents especially if the "pattern" is governed by ideals at variance with their own. Whether the adolescent follows a "hero", the gang standard, his parents, or launches off on his own no one pattern seems often to be followed for long at a time. Indeed there is much ambivalence noted. This is not of course a bad thing in itself for indeed how else could a pattern be arrived at without experimentation in many. Perhaps Blois again provides a good

* for a brief analysis of this change in sources of standards see Zachry --"Emotion and Conduct in Adolescence". P, 163 ff.

**Blois ---"The Adolescent Personality" P. 273.

summary of the common reaction throughout this area.

*"Through all this he remains a very baffling person, swinging rapidly from independence to dependence and back, fearful one day and overconfident the next, moody, oversensitive, never quite sure what he wants and apparently wanting quite opposite and irreconcilable things."

Perhaps we should mention racial prejudice as one characteristic often noted in adolescence. The general fury sometimes evidenced in this regard can be seen as an outcry of their general "gang spirit" of conformity. The extra energy and emotional pitch of adolescence also may explain another^a aspect of this. In general however I feel this too is an outgrowth of child learnings and a reflection of the general opinion of the particular society against those of other race. However, that the adolescent does suspect all who do not fit into his own group standards is well established.

Cole** goes beyond what we have said regarding behavior in general as she notes the school situation. Here the failure of a child to compete because of lack of ability or other reasons is noted as a cause of dishonesty. This motive is strengthened by the self feelings of adolescence but again she concludes that there seems

*Blos ibid P.273.

**Cole "Psychology of Adolescence" P. 158

to be no great change over childhood behavior and that honesty seems largely dependent on;

"intelligence, home background, resistance to suggestion and adequate social development".

11 The Standard of Values and Religion

In dealing in a general way with the behavior of adolescents we have mentioned the importance of various ideals behind that behavior. That is, when actual compulsions is not imposed, the individual must decide how he will behave in accordance with what he considers at the moment to be the supreme value for him. That may be as we have mentioned, his parents' ideals or that code set up by his gang or perhaps by that person who may occupy the place of his hero. Whatever the standard the importance of that standard, and especially of that one which will be adopted permanently will not be questioned.

Here then we may see the place where religion begins to be of importance and how it fits into any comprehensive study of adolescence. We can see that at the onset we find ourselves involved with the problem of defining religion. This problem in turn is one

which most writers seem to think an impossible task. Nevertheless they proceed to give their own definition as certainly one must do in order to have some basis from which to work. We might take as example one put forward by Coe in a section which can profitably be referred to by anyone interested in this question*. In place of a definition he speaks about religion and proposes;

"That we think of Religion as an imminent movement within our valuations, ⁱⁿ a movement that does not terminate any single set of thought contents or in any set of particular values".

Going on from here and admitting the vagueness of such an approach he says;

**"But the difficulty is in the thing itself, not with the proposed point of view. That religion is the most puzzlingly elusive phase of experience is fairly deducible from the history of thought about religion."

That religion involves the setting up of a code of values and obedience to those values is implicit in this type of approach. Perhaps we could do no better than to accept at the moment Jame's definition as a stepping stone to what I consider a more adequate view of religion for our purpose***.

*see Coe "The Psychology of Religion" Chapter IV.

**Coe ibid P.72.

***This of course does not deprecate his approach but recognizes that different aspects are emphasized according to the frame of reference used by each author.

Religion then means for James;

*" The feelings, acts and experiences of individual men in their solitude so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they consider the divine."

From this view of religion as value and response to that value or divine, we see how religion may be said to be back of all adult human activity. Thus we may say the adolescent becoming adult seeks his own "divine" and must establish what is to be for him his religion. In this broad approach we recognize the great range of religions or codes of behavior which confront and bewilder the adolescent as we said earlier. In short the goal set may be entirely selfish, feeling that whatever act advances myself is for me "the good" or it may find itself somewhere along the line leading to complete self giving. This of course may be in deference to almost any "divine" set up whether humanism, politics or any other life goal.

The above view shows us why there may be such a wide range of codes of behavior and religions and why it is so important that young people be given strong and good guidance in this all-important choice. Out side the compulsion of physical force laid upon us by our laws and enforcement agencies of our society men are free

* W. James "Varieties of Religious Experience" P. 31.

to choose their own path. We must be thankful that most people feel the need of acceptance and to have a place in society for this frees us from much anti-social behavior which might otherwise arise. We admit then that most of our behavior falls within certain fairly narrow limits of social acceptability. The number of persons who exceed these limits to one side or the other is relatively small. Nevertheless within these limits there may be a great deal of variation too and this variation is our primary concern here.

It may be said then, as has often been said by authors, that the predominant religion in the North American Continent is success. Because this is true of our society as a whole, and because society has the greatest influence over the choice of religion this has greatly affected adolescent behavior.. Let us take the words of Zachry as an example of many who have dealt with this topic.

*"Pressure to succeed in achievement, as a means of affirming personal worth, is felt by most young people growing up in the United States today**". This feeling is due in part to the pervasive influence of the American, "success psychology". And it arises in large part also from the uncertainties of a changing physical self and of shifting social circumstances. The adolescent normally experiences difficulties in coming to establish a workman like attitude to achievement, since self-doubt normally accompanies

*Zachry---"Emotion and Conduct in Adolescence". P.200

** That Canada may be included in this and other such statements in this chapter I believe is evident. See for example "Young Canada and Religion" a Youth Commission report on this whole area.

developmental changes during these years. But the young person who is emotionally secure, and also, in many instances the deprived adolescent, find stimulus, as well, in the challenge to succeed. Both are likely to gain in assurance of their worth as they develop in proficiency and as they find acceptance in social relationships".

and again,*

"Property is, by many persons, held to be the highest goal of effort, and is the most commonly recognized symbol of worth."

Then owing, as we have seen, to the longing of an adolescent to find himself and be accepted in the adult patterns of his society;

"Many individuals feel pressed to compete aggressively, with little consideration for others in the pursuit of their ends."

"and under current American popular standards of value such as these, in such economic conditions, desire to succeed is likely to be felt in disproportionate keenness".

This religion of success is referred to by almost all writers, any one of which could have been used as well here as the one above. That it exists and indeed holds most of our society in its grasp is beyond doubt. That it is a false religion and leads only to despair is evident as well in the lives of many who have reached the ultimate

*Zachry -----ibid P.149-150.

in this endeavour and found it an empty thing. Indeed were we not situated so fortunately as regards population density and resources our whole race which is devoted to this value would long since have ended in utter frustration. This religion is even applied to girls now when they too often attempt to compete for success of their own before and after marriage. Either that or they push their husbands toward that goal and judge their own position by their husbands' relative progress in achieving that goal. Adolescents growing up in such an atmosphere most often adopt this same religion of success and 75.5% of them in a survey by Ross* see getting enough money as their major problem and the achievement of a good position and income the main aim of their lives.

I have dealt with this form of religion first as it accounts for the majority of our people. The other possible values or religions people may adopt can be neglected by us here but we must deal with the more familiar form of religion in our society- Christianity. The strange part of this is that, for the majority of people, evidence is that Christianity is not their religion as we have been discussing it. It can be seen that that which is most often considered religion is not really that set of values ascribed to most people. As a result then success and Christianity have taken over our loyalties. Nevertheless Christian principles are ingrained into

*Ross M.G. ---- "Religious Beliefs of Youth" P. 94, and all of

the very heart and core of our society. Because of this fact the outlines of Christianity have become blurred through long association and tacit acceptance by the majority of people. It has become a quality taken for granted by us and so closely associated with our society, that we almost assume in popular thought that the two are identical.

Christianity has still however some effect on our total behavior and this warrants our mention of it here, even though the support of Christianity is to the majority merely nominal. As a result our society has a vague awareness of higher values and of what conduct should be but the matter of the practical guidance of day to day activities is governed by values not Christian. As a result we have common ideal goal but a practical code of behavior which differs greatly from this. Let us quote the words of Dr. Nelson as Ross has done to buttress the point and arrive at the same conclusion as Ross does but from a different set of interviews.

*"These are atomistic individuals living on the aftermath of values they do not share, as good examples of a cut-flower culture."

and as Ross continues in his own words;

"The point here is that even among those for whom religion in

the form of the Ten Commandments, the golden rule, the occasional sermon; etc. tends to provide a rough guide in life, one must note the tendency to dilute these ideas in such a way as to make them consistent with the secular standards of society. Less than twenty per cent of the respondents find in religion a basis or a compelling guide for their everyday behavior. For the others one must conclude that religion has almost ceased to provide a significant or lofty ideal which gives life purpose and direction."

We could go further along these lines in drawing on the evidence of other studies but our point I believe is made. There is it is true a relatively small amount of research available on the subject but those studies we have all agree in outline with what must also be our individual opinions. Admitting the inadequacy of his own survey or of any single survey Ross* includes a chapter, summarizing seven other studies in the same field. His conclusions are that all these surveys agree generally speaking and so we will rest our case here.

The main goals or values of life and rules of conduct then in our society are connected with some form of success, security, and adequate amount of money, and in general a comfortable easy life. To attain these goals is primary and behavior which aids their

*Ross ibid Chapter 9 P. 160.

attainment is considered good. There is of course a sort of moral code of higher values left to us by Christian beliefs but this code has been made so flexible in the majority of cases, and so close to what is our daily conduct as to be non-existent for all practical purposes. That there is here a basic contradiction in our society is plain and therefore we see another of the problems facing the adolescent as he tries to determine his own religion. Seeking to find his own place as an adult he looks for that pattern which guides society. Finding it involves two different qualities, a nominal Christian idealism which has degenerated into a weak humanism and seems on the way out, and a success code of actual behavior, he finds difficulty.

I believe that Bloss* succeeds in clearly defining this problem for us.

"An individual can ignore such cultural contradictions by learning to pigeonhole the elements properly. Under certain conditions he may extol the virtues of humility----but in the business world he may equally extol the opposite virtues of assertive self-confidence, of aggressiveness, of shrewd competitiveness. In his quest for consistency however, the adolescent cannot ignore the clashing elements of his culture nor find satisfaction in pigeonholing them."

*Bloss-----"The Adolescent Personality" P. 264.

We will see more of the effect of this dilemma on the whole question of Christianity and adolescence in a later section. For the moment however let us move a step further and ask, in the light of what has been said, just how far we may go in describing religion in adolescence.

III. The Religious Consciousness of Adolescence

If we confined ourselves to that definition of religion used in the preceding section there would be no problem here at all. It is obvious that every person and of course every adolescent must have some set of values, some "divine" about which his life is organized. Without such a focus there would be no direction to life and no central aim about which the life is integrated. We have seen that each young person becoming adult needs to be accepted in this new role into that society of which he is a part. Thus he endeavors to pattern his life along those lines most acceptable to his society or if you like he adopts the religion of his society. Viewed in this way we would at once say there was a consciousness of religion ~~is~~ in adolescence. I do not feel that such a view of religion is adequate however for while establishing a set of values and living in obedience to those values is part of true religion it is only a part.

To this point we see that religion as we view it can be based almost entirely on a human and social level. While such is the religion of the majority of our people it is not true religion.

Karl R. Stolz* in his book lists many of the common definitions of religion and then in summary says;

" The various definitions of religion quoted imply at least five elements - a sense of human need, a conception of an experience that satisfies man's deepest desires, an attitude of dependence on the superhuman, moral and social implications and the involvement of all one's personality relationships."

It can be seen that our "set of values" idea in religion is entirely inadequate in the face of such a broad view of religion. Yet only seen in such a full way can we gain any concept of true religion. Instead then of trying to find an adequate definition of religion let us simply keep the above statement and its great concepts before us. It may be seen that the main element lacking in the view of religion previously used is that sense of man's dependence on the extra - human reality, the Divine, or as it is commonly referred to, God. Yet this very element is the all important one for again as Stolz* says;

"The definitions of religion submitted presuppose a felt human

*Stolz-----"The Psychology of Religious Living" P. 31.

*Stolz----- ibid P.32.

need, a craving for a form of good, physical, moral, or spiritual. This desire-----is one of the sources of religion. Without it- religion cannot exist. The intensity of it gives to religion vitality, urgency, and direction. It motivates the human quest for reality and redemption."

The difference then between our earlier thought about religion is that that "divine" about which the individual organizes his life must be seen as the super human reality of the universe. Man must see his absolute dependence upon this ultimate source of life, of good, of value. Only then does he recognize that those human standards, those social norms, which he previously considered to be the highest value for him no longer apply. From this viewpoint we may see that a man will not likely recognize such dependence until some deep experience in his own life makes him realize that he is helpless in his own strength to meet his difficulty. Some great sorrow, some frustration which he is entirely incapable of meeting, will likely be necessary before he becomes aware of the necessity for there being a higher order. That is unless he has been taught by his own parents or some other agency to place himself in such a position of dependence before.

Is there then a religious consciousness in adolescence? We must say, "no" to this question. Certainly there is no instinct of

religion in mankind, as most writers in the psychology of religion agree. Indeed in the first chapter of this work we saw how few are the real instincts in the individual. If there were such an instinct it would be hard to understand the ability of so many to ignore it and the great discrepancies there are among the manifestations of such religion. We may go further and say not only is there no instinct but there is no consciousness of religion inherent to the adolescent personality. He may through his childhood experience have been taught such religious consciousness just as he may, as more often happens, have been taught to seek success for himself and rights for all individuals in accordance with his social milieu. Undoubtedly there is a sense of need in the adolescent but this lack in himself is more likely to be attributed to his own incomplete development. He is dissatisfied with his position but sees that as present failure to meet the standards of his own society for adult behavior and achievement. Not until he has reached such human goals and found no real satisfaction in them is he likely to look higher than the human level for an answer to his problems. Since then the adolescent is new to the whole realm of self assertion and has a long way to go before reaching such goals it is unlikely that he will be driven back to recognize his absolute dependence on ~~God~~. God. I repeat then there is no religious consciousness in adolescence unless it has been ingrained through teaching during childhood.

Such a conclusion then will illustrate for us why there are so few adolescents to be found within the sphere of religious activities. Since such religion as the individual has depends on the teaching he has received, and since there is so little real religion among the adult population of our American continent* it is easy to see why there should be such a small number of "religious adolescents." This however brings us to consider adolescence and its relation for formal or institutionalised Christianity.

IV. Adolescence and Formal Religion

AS we would expect to find as result of the situation examined here formal religious practices, specifically with relation to Christianity, fall off in adolescence as compared to childhood levels. This is of course true only of those families which attempt to instill any religious teaching whatever. The others either stay where they have always been in oblivion as far as Christianity is concerned, or else general rebellion against parental authority may lead to an interest in religion not taught in childhood. Among those of any religious experience, as is to be expected, beliefs and religious activities are for the first time questioned and perhaps refuted. This attitude however is not unique to religion but applies as we have seen to all areas. Growing

*This statement could be extended far beyond the boundaries here set but this area is our immediate concern.

independent attitudes and intellectual abilities naturally lead to questioning as they must if traditional ideas and habits are to be accepted on a mature level.

It is of interest here to notice the theory put forward by many but especially as we shall note it by Blos* that the attitude of the adolescent to the church will be the same as to authority in general. All childhood experiences are linked to parental control and seen as extensions of that and so with the necessity of the adolescent's finding of a new relationship to parents, comes the same need with regard to other institutions.

**"In the same way, his attitude toward parental authority will be carried along to influence his relationship to all subsequent authority, be it the gang leader, the teacher, the employer, the Church or the state itself."

That is if parental control has been lessened appropriately with the onset of adolescence and has always been exercised with understanding and uniformity there will not be such a tendency to absolute rebellion in this period. Of course there may be rebellion of a short-lived nature but just as this will be resolved¹ in the new relationship on an adult level so will the relationship to the church. On the other hand if parents have so exercised their control that the adolescent feels he must cast it off entirely, the same will be

*Blos "The Adolescent Personality"

**Blos Ibid P.319

true of his attitude to the Church if that has been part of childhood. Conversely if there has been no religious connection in his life to that point.

*"They often feel cheated by the fact they were never allowed to become acquainted with religion."

Even where the attitude to parents and authority is good there will often be a "phase of instability" but this is good for only from such a phase can come good reasoned beliefs and attitudes.

With this background it is of interest to look at the actual beliefs and practices of adolescence and youth from a statistical viewpoint. Of course statistics may always be misleading but comparison with other surveys indicates whether the findings depict a true trend or not. Thus even though there may be differences in the actual figures arrived at, the general picture can be ascertained. This the study by Ross previously referred to accomplishes and so I use here his ~~gen~~- general conclusions.**

Of first, belief in God itself, we might at first consider things look quite "rosy" for about three quarters of the youth questioned believe in God but this must be questioned further;

"For in the majority of cases what is involved is not "belief"

*Blos Ibid P.297.

**Ross "Religious Beliefs of Youth" Chapter 8 "A Summary Statement".

as this term is commonly used, but something much closer to "assent to" or even "an affirmative reaction to an echo"*.

and further it is apparent from the study that what they mean by believing in God must be seen further in their interpretation of belief.

"Belief then seems to mean acceptance of an idea far out on the periphery of life, with little meaning for or relationship to everyday life."*

Their conception of God is apparently a very clouded one as is their picture of religious and theological questions in general. There are, as we would expect of adolescence, many doubts about traditional beliefs. Again I say this would not be too serious in itself but here it is for;

**"They are not active doubts-----they are passive "wonderings" in which there is no effort to settle the matter one way or the other."

All this bears out what we have accepted all along that the characteristics of adolescence are not greatly removed from those of the rest of life. Such reactions in this age group simply assert the truth of our earlier statements that Christianity has

*Ross ibid P. 142.

**Ross ibid P. 143.

no real place in our society but merely "hangs on" like old perfume. This is further emphasized in the report of religious practices of adolescents for less than one half go to Church weekly. Taking this along with other religious practices we see from the surveys that even those who "believe" in such practices as Church attendance, Bible reading and prayer, very seldom if ever turn to them for* "inspiration, insight or the strengthening of convictions".

He goes further to point out that of those who attend Church we may draw out three groups lest we become too complacent over these figures.^r

**1- sixteen percent who find these practices meaningful.

2- thirty-five percent who find these practices just make them "feel better" or "soothe" them.

3- fifty percent who are frankly superstitious about such practices and think thereby to be "protected".

In case we need to be further convinced of this point he goes on to demonstrate that;

***"Almost half of the group think that "irreligious" denotes not going to Church, not reading the Bible, swearing, smoking or a number of things which might be thought of as

*Ross Ibid P. 144.

** Ross Ibid P. 145-146.

*** Ross Ibid P. 146-147.

relatively petty in a larger religious perspective. Only a quarter consider irreligious to mean being materialistic or selfish or lacking in consideration for other. Thus it would seem that many young people do not think of religion as affecting life at those points which are of greatest importance to them.-----most young people haven't any clear idea whether their religious beliefs make much difference or not."

To say more on this subject would only be to be labour the point which I believe is infinitely clear as to the relationship of adolescents to religion.

Perhaps we might say one further word with regard to further causes of disbelief among adolescents. Here Cole* quoting another survey finds that chronological age has no effect on accepted beliefs and that girls usually revolt against beliefs less often than boys, less profoundly and at a later stage. Education, and economic level have no effect on acceptance of beliefs and intelligence very little but most important,

***"The relation between acceptance of religious dogmas and religious observances in the home or attendance of the entire family at Church is relatively high. With religious education or knowledge of the Bible there is none whatever."

*Cole "Psychology of Adolescence " P. 172.

**Cole "Psychology of Adolescence" P. 172/

Especially to be noted is the fact that;

"Those who **rejected** religious authority averaged at the seventy- third percentile on the intelligence tests,used; those who accepted averaged at the fourty-eighth percentile"

This of course is to be expected in that those who have better mental equipment naturally use it and so are more inclined to doubt. This does not say that some of these more intelligent people will not later return to belief but it does underline the importance of a sound intellectual approach on the part of religion. We should mention too that the common idea that Universities turn out atheists does not apply. It has been shown by several studies as by this one* that those who enter with belief leave with belief.

*Schneiders "The Psychology of Adolescence" P. 377.

CHAPTER THREE

RELIGION AND ADOLESCENT PROBLEMS

ADOLESCENT PROBLEMS
AND RELIGION

We come now in our study to make some application and put together the main concepts of adolescence we have considered. This is perhaps a more difficult section to deal with because again it is immeasurable in terms of set tests and accurate figures. However again we must look at the type of answer Religion brings to bear on adolescent problems if we are to see any helpful suggestion and do justice to both subjects. Again we may well find disagreement here as to what type of religion should be dealt with in this connection. While we could discuss religion as a whole in that general sense used early in the previous chapter I will not here do so. Other forms of religion may have answers to some adolescent difficulties but it is my conviction that only Christianity shows that way to the most adequate of all solutions to all problems. This is not to say that through Christianity a broad, simple solution will suddenly emerge to solve all ills. Experience proves it just does not work out that way. The ultimate responsibility lies with the individual and so depends on human nature and this is the source of the incalculable element. Christianity itself recognizes this in its doctrine of man and his freedom but despite this, or perhaps through this factor it demonstrates man's real nature, his responsibility,

and what he must do to find full life.

Let us pause then to briefly state those assertions^s that Christianity makes and which we will apply in this chapter. First we believe in God who created the world and all therein. We believe that God is truly revealed in His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, to be a God of Divine Love. We believe that Christ also reveals man's true nature and what we are meant to be as the head of all God's creatures. Through Christ as well we see God is continually seeking each individual and that every person is precious in His sight. God, active and still overruling the world and history, sends His Son as the Holy Spirit to seek and to redeem his creatures. He accepts us as we are, He offers forgiveness and restores us in right relationship to himself, our Creator. He gives us strength and guidance if we will accept it to become ever more nearly like Christ and lastly, through the death and resurrection of His Son, we are offered a share in His victory over all things even death itself. We are free to choose life eternal, full, and free, or to reject it and continue in our sin leading to death, but all are made to serve God and to be in the world-but not of it.

In dealing with the problems of adolescence we could involve ourselves in a great range of detail, case studies and speculation.

However, all problems seem to stem from the one main question of adolescence which arises from the very nature of the life stage itself. That is the individual, becoming an adult independent, responsible, purposive, person must achieve this very adaptation and development. We will deal then with only those most basic problems the adolescent must meet in this development and see how Christianity relates itself to those problems and may serve as a guide through them.

For sake of organisation I have chosen to use the statement of Blois* concerning the three basic needs of the period. Our consideration then will be divided into these three main areas and we proceed with the first.

I. Emancipation from the Family

This is undoubtedly the first step the adolescent takes in becoming an adult. His own physical, mental and emotional developments as previously outlined, together with his awareness of his new place in society demand that he free himself from the supervision of childhood. Not only is it necessary that he be freed from family in this way, but also from others who may have had authority over him. If he does not desire and is not permitted this freedom his

*Blois "The Adolescent Personality". P. 275

growth to adulthood is drastically impaired and there will not be a good adjustment here where it is meant to come. The importance of a good adjustment here cannot be overestimated for his attitude to family authority will most closely effect his attitude to all authority. If he has learned to rebel against control as the only way of having a tight hold on him loosened, his adjustment to the lesser controls on an adult may be very unsatisfactory. On the other hand, if he is given freedom at home as he matures and needs it, but yet knows he is constantly backed by loving parents ever ready to help him when he has need, he will learn to substitute self control for overt compulsion and can become a good responsible citizen.

This break from family authority must come in this period then and it must be accomplished as smoothly as possible. We mentioned in the previous chapter the close tie between the adolescent's attitude to family and to Church. This analogy may be extended to all fields of life for he who has had a healthy experience here will not so likely become the delinquent, the sex pervert and the trouble-maker of society. The break is not easy either for parent or adolescent and a great deal of patience and understanding will be required on both sides. For both parties it is a new experience and it is desired by the child as it should be also by the parent if he seeks the greatest welfare of his child.

The parent must not however cut the child off but somehow manage to continue to offer suggestions and help where they are needed. The adolescent obviously required this help and security to support his efforts in such a new field of endeavor, for his own powers are far from secure.

The adolescent then needs affection and guidance, freedom and great understanding even though at times he seems to resent them. He is seeking a whole new relationship to his family, others, and himself in independence and freedom. Those parents who realize this and accept this growing independence as a credit to their efforts at raising the child will find that, in the end, the new adult will be close to them but on a new basis of equality and mutual assistance.

Christianity then may be seen to provide real help in this area first by its principle of mutual love and understanding. If this is accepted by all concerned then the first step in the process is achieved. Not only so but Christianity provides as well that new greater fellowship into which both parents and adolescents may project themselves. They are not then simply cut off from their original family ties, but rather those earlier bands are strengthened, and enlarged by union with a greater fellowship within the

Church. The whole relationship of individual to family, to the Church, and to the world is seen in a new light as it is recognized that all are sons of God and brothers of one another and that each must respect and aid the other in meeting those problems we all share.

The first need of the adolescent then is to find, through emancipation from his family, the first step along the road to independence yet with a helpful relationship to all people. He is seeking to find himself in all these new areas of his life and if, in this area which has always been closest to him, there is a good adjustment, he is well on the way to firm, sound adulthood.

2- Development of a Good Relationship to Others and a Good Attitude to Self

It will quickly be seen that this area is very closely related to the first and indeed they are almost coexistent though perhaps this step follows on good family adjustments. The individual has to feel adequate to his new role, to feel he has a definite place in society in this new relationship, and to determine what will be his attitude to other people in this new equality. The basic

position of the standard of values adopted in this whole realm is evident for only as he has determined what his goal in life is and how this fits into his dealings with others can he even begin to work this out in its practical application.

Perhaps we can start then with the standard of values and see here the great help Christianity offers. In the face of ⁿmay ~~on~~ conflicting viewpoints obvious in society to the new adult, Christianity offers an authoritative voice. This is the truth about the world, its creator and God, and about us as His creatures. Here too is a cause and a high ideal big enough and compelling enough to absorb all the new enthusiasm and adventure of adolescence and to direct it to service of God and mankind. Not only so but the whole question of relationship to self and to others is here involved as well. We are to aid and support all men in love as brothers. It may also be seen that each individual has importance because he is a child of God. If the person sees himself as inadequate and unimportant at the moment, he is given hope that through the service of God he will achieve that highest end to which he can attain, and from ~~F~~ God he receives the power to accomplish these things. Perhaps even more important for the adolescent, he is assured of acceptance by God as he is now regardless of ineffectiveness and failure. The significance of the answer given here by Christianity is beyond measure both in

working out this problem and that of the emancipation from the family. As we said before, the basis of all our relationships is to be love and understanding and this not out of a humanistic doctrine alone but from the God of the world who is love. Here is the purpose of life, the order of things and the true understanding of man himself and all his interrelationships.

There are many who would oppose the authority and validity of Christianity here saying that other standards and philosophies are better. However it is not my purpose to discuss the reality of God or the validity of Christianity. I simply say that Christianity has all this to offer to confused adolescents as to confused adults and that if they will bring themselves to accept this religion it has the answer to those most pressing problems of adolescent life. I will not go forward to spell out the significance of Christianity in this area for that has been much more ably done in many available works. In any case whoever accepts this basic idea may see for himself how it fits in with all we have said of adolescence.

Perhaps one special factor should be referred to here as a very pertinent problem in adolescent relationships. This concerns the matter of sexual awakening and its physical demands in both male and female. Here again the extended period of adolescence and its

time of lengthy preparation in high school and University lays a very real problem upon them. Fully capable of sexual activity and procreation, they find they are denied generally any acceptable way of fulfilling this urge in our modern society. The desire cannot be ignored by most and so either some form of sublimation must be utilized to control it, or else illicit sex practices or masturbation be employed. In this area very real help is demanded and young people do want guidance. The result of an overall acceptance of the prevalent "anything goes" attitude on our society's moral life would be tragic as we may well see beginning to occur now. Not only so, but the all-important acceptance of this factor as good and wholesome when kept on a high level may be completely prevented by unpleasant early practices.

Here too Christianity has a great word to say for is sex is seen as a gift of God and as intended to be used as such, it takes its rightful elevated place in the thought of the individual. Couple this with the selfless attitude of respect and seeking the best for others and intercourse will become something desired only after a Christian home has been set up. In such a situation alone can the full measure of its enjoyment be experienced as only one phase of a total companionship. If young people are shown that and are given real help in meeting the difficulties here involved there will be a very strong motivation toward avoiding all excesses connected with

the whole phase of the relationship of the sexes.

Good heterosexual adjustment must be reached in this period if it is to be reached at all. Surely then a practical helpful approach to this, backed by the authoritative principles of Christianity is an approach longed for by our young people. It offers real help not only in relation to sexual adjustments but, as we have seen, to all interpersonal relationships and attitudes to self. This is the second great problem of adolescence and one in which the Christian Religion again has real authority and guidance to offer.

3- Securing Economic Independence

This, the third major task of adolescence again is complicated by the lengthening out of the period and the now availability of jobs which can be held along with school work. Here again is a real need which is worked ^s toward by each teen-ager as he prepared himself for his life work through education and experience. Again here he must see that his abilities are developing and offer him success in [^] some field. If he feels that he is inadequate and cannot compete on the same basis as others, maladjustments may occur. Here again note too the importance of Christianity with its doctrine of both the importance of the individual and the subordination of self

before God and fellow men.

When it comes finally to choosing what work to enter, Christianity itself can offer only a principle but that a very important one. That is, does the work you choose offer real opportunity for service in however small a way that may appear? And more important, is this the place God intends you to serve in His purpose for your life? Not only so but will you be happy in your work seeing that the simplest task can be dedicated to God and that your job is your vocation and not just a way to earn necessary money?

Well certainly as I said at the outset I have not dealt with adolescent problems* in detail but only in principle. Yet I feel that all problems met fit somewhere into the scheme of those mentioned and the value of a real Christian faith in facing them can be worked out from this pattern. The development of self-control, of independence, yet in a relationship of Christian love is the task to be accomplished by those who would become adults. In the pattern of Christianity they may see their real place, their goal and the means to the end and thus become strong and understanding citizens of a weary and troubled world.

In summary then with this general treatment before us let us see just what the Church has to offer to the adolescent and in what

*For detailed analysis and a practical approach to Adolescent Problems see Taylor "Do Adolescents Need Parents" as well as such books as Crow - "Our teen Age Boys and Girls" and other works referred to earlier.

way it can treat with his problems. We mentioned the need of the adolescent to find and set before him that "good", that goal about which he will center his life. What greater good and what greater challenge could be set for him than that ideal of Christian love and a service. Here is a goal he may see as well worthy of his persuanance and one which he can never use up or find hollow. Not only so but it is an ideal which has the authority of the scriptures, the Church and the lives of Christians to back it in the face of that bewildering variety of goals others follow. Surely then here is a basic need and problem of adolescence for which the Church has the answer.

Closely connected with this is the matter of the personality of Jesus Christ. The period of hero worship which occurs in adolescence seems to lead directly to this consideration. Surely if Christ is presented as he really was, a strong purposeful man who lived as we live, who enjoyed life as well as suffered in life because of men, if he is seen in all the fullness of his life and activity He is one above all to deserve worship and emulation. Here then is another phase of "the ideal" but here it may be grasped in down-to-earth human form- if you like the ideal personified. Add to this the Christian assertion that Christ was also the Son of God showing us God's true nature as well as that which we are

meant to be. See as well that Jesus is also the risen Christ who offers all who will follow a share in his triumph and who is active and alive in today's world and adolescence is shown its master and guide and companion.

We spoke of the need of the adolescent to break from the restrictions of family and establish himself in a new relationship to a wider group and in a relationship where his own choice and action, is relied upon. We spoke of the social exchange necessary as he develops his new found powers in this field and his need to feel an important part of such a society. Again here, the Church with its youth groups and its ~~small~~ fellowship can meet a very real need of this group. In a day when our big cities and factories have deprived us of much of our individuality this is again a great contribution the Church can make. Within its fellowship each person can establish new friendships, can experience all the fullness of the social relationship and can find a place to work and have responsibility as he realizes he is important to this group. All this and that within a fellowship united by a common interest in Christianity and in applying that faith to daily living.

Another aspect of this is the outlet it ~~g~~ gives to each one to do some practical useful service. In a united purposeful way their religion can be put to action in Christian works and the result of

such corporate enterprise will be seen to grow and have real effect in those projects undertaken. Nor is such activity limited to strictly religious service as the community as a whole is kept in mind together with the responsibility of each in the community.

Adolescents need guidance throughout this period as we have said. Again in the Church, sincere Christian adults, often the leaders of youth groups can be found. These together with the minister provide interested, understanding adults in whom to confide and who should be able to give sound advice. Even beyond such guidance is that available in the scriptures themselves. There are to be found basic rules such as the ten commandments, and general teachings such as in the greatness of the sermon on the mount. There are to be found examples of men meeting life situations in a way which results from their experience of God. There are to be found bits of practical earthy advice such as that in Proverbs. In short the Church and above all the Bible can provide that very necessary guidance for adolescent life as for the life of all men.

I have left to the last in this specific dealing with the church's application to adolescent problems perhaps the most important. This then is the whole sphere of worship, both corporate and private and more specifically as I here deal with it, prayer*.

^{60.44 23}
* see such "Prayer" G.A. Buttrick for discussion here.

That this is significant in thinking of adolescent problems is evident for;

*"No psychology of prayer can overlook needs, for every prayer comes to focus on a need."

In a time when emotions are at a new pitch but must be controlled and sometimes reoriented, when there is so much uncertainty and so much that is unfamiliar prayer can be a great source of help. If the individual feels torn and upset nothing can so renew as prayer. When he feels confused and anxious, prayer can help him find his answer. When he feels unworthy and guilty, through prayer he may receive assurance of forgiveness. When he feels inadequate and helpless, prayer can be the source of renewal and strength, of a strong conviction and inner peace. The need of the adolescent for prayer and its value in meeting his problems are obvious for;

**"Rightly used, prayer may have enlarging effectiveness in the psychological needs of personality."

and

***"Of all methods and powers of regeneration none is more creative than prayer. For prayer is the heart of aspiration and devotion as devotion is the creative source of rebirth".

* "Psychology of Religion" ----P.E. Johnson P.114

**Johnson ibid P.123

***Johnson ibid P.137.

When it can supply such healing and resource in all phases of adolescent life it is tragic that so few young people are given the help available. Adolescents have many problems and great problems. The Church can provide many aids to meet those problems through the ministration of its religion.

CONCLUSIONS

THE TASK OF THE CHURCH

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Again here our treatment of this subject will be no more than cursory. To do otherwise and do it with any real value would be to launch out on another new field of investigation. In any case the understanding of the adolescent himself as we have tried to outline it is the basic problem. From there on we must leave it to the Church itself to work out its own curricula and methods.

That the Church is failing to deal effectively with Adolescents is evident from the realization among Church leaders themselves that the adolescents simply are not present in Church. Suddenly from the large attendance at Sunday School we drop down to a small number of young people who have an especially keen religious interest and fine home example. And this just when young people are forming their own ideals and plans about which their whole life is to be centered. The result is that this very basic center of life in religion is not being presented to new adults and so it is no wonder the Church has small hold on the bulk of our adult population. Not only does this damage the Church itself, but a much needed authority and source of guidance in working out the adjustments to self-governed life is not being given to the adolescent and he is further puzzled by that lack of authority.

Moralism¹ itself is not enough to present to adolescents for they

seek the theological basis behind the moral code. They want to know why this code has any more demand on them than any other for certainly it is not the accepted standard of values in society. Not only so but as we have seen the basic tenets of belief are first sincerely doubted in this stage of growth when new intellectual abilities, and new freedom - consciousness question the validity of all philosophies and concepts. Those who doubt first and who doubt most seriously are precisely those of the upper brackets as far as ~~ment~~^{mental} mental ability goes as we noticed in Chapter two.

It is evident then that the Church must recognize the conflicting forces it is meeting in the mind of young people. It must deal with these problems and show the enduring validity of Christianity in the face of all such problems. It must present to people its basis in theology not just its working out in moral principles. It must teach the content of its book the Holy Bible and not just those familiar stories which have been so often presented. All of this has been said before by great men and very well presented in all its aspects as they relate to practical application within the Church itself* Nevertheless in view of the character of adolescence and of the surroundings in which adolescents mature this strong intellectual approach and proclamation cannot be too much emphasized**.

*see perhaps the latest of such works "The Teaching Ministry of the Church" J.D. Smart

**That the Church is not alone in such a lack is interesting to notice as for example in the analysis of education as a whole "So Little For the Mind" Dr. H. Neatby

Having then established its authority and validity, the Church can proceed with understanding and with faith to guide adolescents through the questions and problems they face. This is its responsibility to the young people of our society and to our society itself if it is to be restored to that religious conviction which was the "raison d'etre" of our society to begin with. The Church must give back to our young people the faith, the religion they have lost and not just a system of morals. It must give then first that principle of life and from there aid in the working out of that principle from one situation to the next in moral behavior.

Of course the type of religious re-education here envisioned requires a well educated and trained staff of lay teachers which in itself is a great problem. However it demonstrates the work that must be done by the Church if it is to take again that central place in society which is rightfully its own. Involved here is a new realization that the Church no longer exists in a favorable society but in a realm of ignorance within its fellowship and indifference beyond it. For this situation, for this failure the Church has no one to blame but itself.

It is a bold program, an adventurous program which is laid upon the Church. It is one which demands the re-thinking of much that has

been too easily accepted and traditionalised. It may well involve new methods and approaches previously never considered. However the faith the Church possesses is equal to such changes. Surely also if we as a church are to deal specifically with adolescents with all their seeking, their questioning and their enthusiasm, we must meet them on their own ground. Thereby we may achieve for ourselves that renewed vigour of our faith which our youth themselves can give us.

Our task then is to provide this real basis of a strong life to & our adolescents in such a form that they can be stirred and attracted by it. Knowing their basic needs and interests we must provide within the Church a place where they can find enjoyment and entertainment as well. We must provide them with the social intercourse, the fellowship and fun they seek. Why should not the Church provide dances for example as well as the other outlets required by such exuberant young people but provide them in an atmosphere that is religious in the best sense of the word. Our young people must be shown religion is part of all their life and that its doctrines and its codes are very practical and applicable to the situation right where they are. But they must also be given that guidance for life which as mentioned they seek and they must be challenged by the Church to reach out for the highest of ideals which is involved in the

one real truth of the world, God our Creator, and His Son Jesus Christ. If we can rightly present our Gospel it can do all this and more not only to build fine Christian adults but to build a new world as well. This may sound like high idealism but if so it is well in tune with adventuresome spirit of adolescents themselves as with the faith we possess. So then are we all to do as Paul;

*"Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal ~~of~~ for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

* Phil. 3:13,14.

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